

gaining reference to said first service by said second service;

wherein said steps of subsequently invoking said service connector interface and gaining reference to said first service are carried out by an application program operative in conjunction with said second service, the instantiating including reading a configuration file providing an indicator for said service connector interface.

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10. (Twice Amended) A computer program product comprising:  
a computer usable medium having computer readable code embodied therein for providing a reference to a first service in a distributed environment to a second service in a local environment in a computer system comprising:

computer readable program code devices configured to cause said computer system to effect enabling definition of a service connector interface in conjunction with said first service, the service connector interface encapsulating logic necessary to retrieve service instances in the distributed environment not in a directory service in the local environment;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause said computer system to effect subsequently invoking said service connector interface in conjunction with said second service; and

computer readable program code devices configured to cause said computer system to effect gaining reference to said first service by said second service, wherein said computer readable program code devices comprise:

computer readable program code devices configured to cause said computer system to effect retrieving a service instance at said service connector interface;

computer readable program code devices configured to cause said computer system to effect obtaining a service reference from said first service; and

computer readable program code devices configured to cause said computer system to effect returning said service reference obtained from said first service to said second service.

28. (Twice Amended) A system for providing dynamic references between services in a computer system comprising:

means for enabling definition of a service connector interface in conjunction with said first service, said definition enabling means includes means for developing a computer program module adhering to said service connector interface in conjunction with said first service;

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el 7 means for subsequently invoking said service connector interface in conjunction with said second service, wherein said means for subsequently invoking said service connector interface comprises means for instantiating said service connector at said second service; and

means for gaining reference to said first service by said second service.

37. (Amended) A core profile engine for use in gateway or firewall servers for enabling client applications to access plug-in service modules in a distributed computing environment without embedding location and negotiation logic within the client applications, the engine comprising:

an application programming interface in communication with the client applications and adapted with interfaces for processing a request for a service provided by one of the plug-in service modules; and

a pluggable interface attaching to the plug-in service modules, wherein the attaching includes providing an initialization parameter comprising a storage location for each of the plug-in service modules;

wherein the pluggable interface further includes a service connector associated with each of the attached plug-in service modules that is adapted to receive the service request from the application programming interface and to return a reference to the one service module providing the service based on the storage location.

38. (Amended) The core profile engine of claim 37, wherein the plug-in service modules are selected from a group consisting of an authorization plug-in, an authentication plug-in, a notification plug-in, a log plug-in, a group plug-in, an entity identification factory plug-in, and a replication plug-in.